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AUTHOR Hutslar, Sally
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ABSTRACT

A brief explanation of the factors associated with the "pygmalion effect" is presented and focuses on how teacher expectations of high or low student performance in a physical education class may influence the student's actual achievement. A model identifying four areas of teacher student interaction that differ with regard to high and low expectancy students is given. The first area is input, the amount and difficulty of new material presented to students. Students labeled as slow have been found to receive fewer opportunities to learn new material. The second is climate, the tone of the interaction process between teacher and student. Teachers appear to create a warmer atmosphere for brighter students. Feedback, the third area, is the teacher's use of praise and criticism after academic exchange. Teachers tend to praise high expectancy students more frequently. The fourth area is output, the length of time the teacher is willing to spend seeking a successful conclusion and the frequency with which the student is engaged in academic behavior. Using this model, a list of questions is presented that can serve as an indicator of teacher actions in relation to teacher expectations. This list can serve as a general guide for a teacher in evaluating interaction patterns with high and low ability students. A technique for teacher self-evaluation using classroom observations and a behavior checklist is outlined. (JD)

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IS THE EXPECTANCY PHENOMENON OPERATING IN MY GYM?

BY SALLY HUTSLAR

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SP 019 427

IS THE EXPECTANCY PHENOMENON OPERATING IN MY GYM?

In the past decade there have been a number of studies conducted to determine the effects of teacher expectations on student achievement. And, there is now considerable support for the basic premise of the "pygmalion effect" as first identified by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). However, to date, there has been little written to help teachers evaluate the individual expectations they have for their students, or the interaction patterns that result from those expectations.

The purpose of this article is three fold. First, to present a brief explanation of the factors associated with the pygmalion effect. Second, to provide a method that teachers can use to evaluate the expectations they have for students and the possible effects those expectations may have on the performance of their students. And, third, to describe a method that teachers can use to make systematic changes in their interaction patterns with students.

The basic tenet of the pygmalion effect is that you get what you expect. That is to say, when a teacher believes students are low (or high) in ability, the teacher interacts with the students in such a way as to almost insure low (or high) performance from those students. Rosenthal (1974), as a result of his own research and that of others, developed a model to explain the pygmalion effect. The model identifies four areas or types of teacher interactions that have been shown to differ

SP 019 427

with regard to high and low expectancy students. The four areas are: input, climate, feedback and output.

Input refers to the amount and difficulty of new material presented to students. Students labled as slow have been found (Rosenthal, 1974) to receive fewer opportunities to learn new material, and also to have less difficult material taught to them (Mendoza et. al, 1972).

Climate is the tone of the interaction process between teacher and student. Teachers appear to create a warmer socio-emotional atmosphere for brighter students. Many non-verbal behaviors associated with positive emotional attraction are displayed by teachers more frequently with students believed to be bright (Cooper and Good, 1977).

Feedback refers to the teacher's use of praise and criticism after academic exchange. Teachers tend to praise high expectancy students more frequently and proportionately more per correct response than lows (Cooper and Baron, 1977). Also, lows tend to receive more criticism than highs.

Output refers to the length of time the teacher is willing to spend seeking a successful conclusion and the frequency with which the student is engaged in academic behavior. Teachers give more clues and do more re-phrasing when highs answer a question incorrectly than when lows answer incorrectly (Brophy and Good, 1970). Also, teachers allow bright students longer to respond before re-directing unanswered questions to other students (Rowe, 1969).

From the research that has been conducted, both in gymnasiums and classrooms, it would appear that the pygmalion effect is a ubiquitous phenomenon. That is, at all levels of education and in a variety of class settings, teacher expectations influence teacher-student interaction patterns, which in turn, effect student performance. Is there cause for alarm? What can be done about it?

First, it is important to realize that to have expectations of others is not necessarily bad! In fact, high expectations of others is usually positively associated with a corresponding high performance. Second, it is not even bad to have different expectations for different students. Expectancies only become a problem when a teacher's expectations influence, in a negative manner, either the way in which the teacher interacts with students, or the performance of students. When a teacher conveys challenging yet realistic expectations to students, there is no cause for alarm.

As teachers we all have expectations of those we teach. However, the research on expectancy (Brophy and Good, 1974) indicates that only some teachers treat students differently as a result of their expectations. Other teachers, dispite their expectations, treat all students basically the same. Thus, it would be useful to teachers to be able to evaluate their own teaching behavior and determine the extent to which their expectations may mediate the learning process of their students.

Self Evaluation of Differential Responses to High and Low Students

A first step that can be taken is to look at one's own interactions with "good" and "poor" students. Following are a list of questions, related to the factors identified by Rosenthal, that can serve as an indicator of teacher actions in relation to teacher expectations.

Rosenthal's Factors	Questions
Input (teaching new material)	1. Do I expect enough from my "low" ability students?
	2. Do I present new and challenging material to my "low" as well as my "high" ability students?
Climate (warmth)	3. Do I smile as frequently at my poorest students as I do at my best students? At my least favorite student as my favorite student?
	4. Do my non-verbal responses convey negative feelings to my "low" students (frowns, shrugs, rolling eyes)?
	5. Do I encourage (by creating a friendly environment) all students to feel free to initiate a conversation with me?
Feedback (praise, criticism correction)	6. Do I give as much corrective feedback on skill performance to my "low" ability student as my "high" ability students?
	7. Do I praise and respond positively to appropriate behavior and/or good performance of my "low" students, or do I treat it as a fluke and allow it to pass un-noticed?
Output (opportunity to respond, attention)	8. Am I less tolerant of incorrect answers and/or inappropriate behavior of my "low" ability students?
	9. Do I give my "low" ability students as much time to answer questions as my "high" ability students?

Your answers to these questions can serve as a general guide for evaluating your interaction patterns with high and low ability students. However, in order to obtain a more objective look at the differential manner in which we interact with students, a more systematic approach is needed. A suitable approach involves the use of self-recording techniques as the means of collecting accurate information about interactions with students. Self recording techniques can be used by experienced teachers in their own classrooms and by pre-service teachers during student teaching and other field experiences. The procedures for recording one's own teaching behavior and the steps necessary to initiate change are outlined below.

A Procedure for Self Recording and Behavior Change

1. Select a "high" and "low" student from each of several classes.

2. Select one or two behavior categories from those listed below.
   a. positive skill feedback
   b. corrective skill feedback
   c. negative behavior statements
   d. positive behavior statements
   e. teacher initiated interactions not related to class (e.g. other school related areas or social)
   f. student initiated interactions
   g. number of opportunities a student has to respond (verbally and/or skill performance)
   h. amount of time a student has to respond to a question
   i. number of positive non-verbal actions (smiles, hand signals, etc.)
   j. number of negative non-verbal actions (frowns, postures indicating displeasure, etc.)
   k. other behaviors that you identify!
3. During class, tally each occurance of the selected behaviors in relation to your interactions with the <u>two</u> target students. Tallies can be recorded on your clip board or in your grade book.

4. Collect data on each student for a minimum of 5 days.

5. Plot the data for each student on a graph (see Figure 1.).

6. Evaluate the graph and initiate change in your interaction pattern, if needed. Suggestions for initiating change include:
   a. set a goal for that behavior
   b. continue to record and graph
   c. tell others what you are doing and about your progress!
   d. write reminders to yourself on your lesson plan, grade book, etc.

7. Do periodic follow-up checks to see that desired performance is maintained.

Though at first glance this approach may appear difficult and time consuming, in reality, it will require very little time during any given class. Interactions are only recorded on two students in a given class and only in relation to one or two behavior categories. The most difficult part is remembering to record the interactions immediately after they occur: a procedure which becomes easy with practice.

Since we a teachers set expectations for others, we are, at least in part a cause of the pygmalion effect. Therefore, we can also become part of the cure. First we must learn to set challenging and realistic expectations for <u>all</u> our students. And second, we must learn to treat all of our students as though we expect them to achieve to the level we have set. This means creating a positive yet challenging environment that encourages students to produce in relation to their abilities.

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Examples of Graphs for Teacher Behaviors

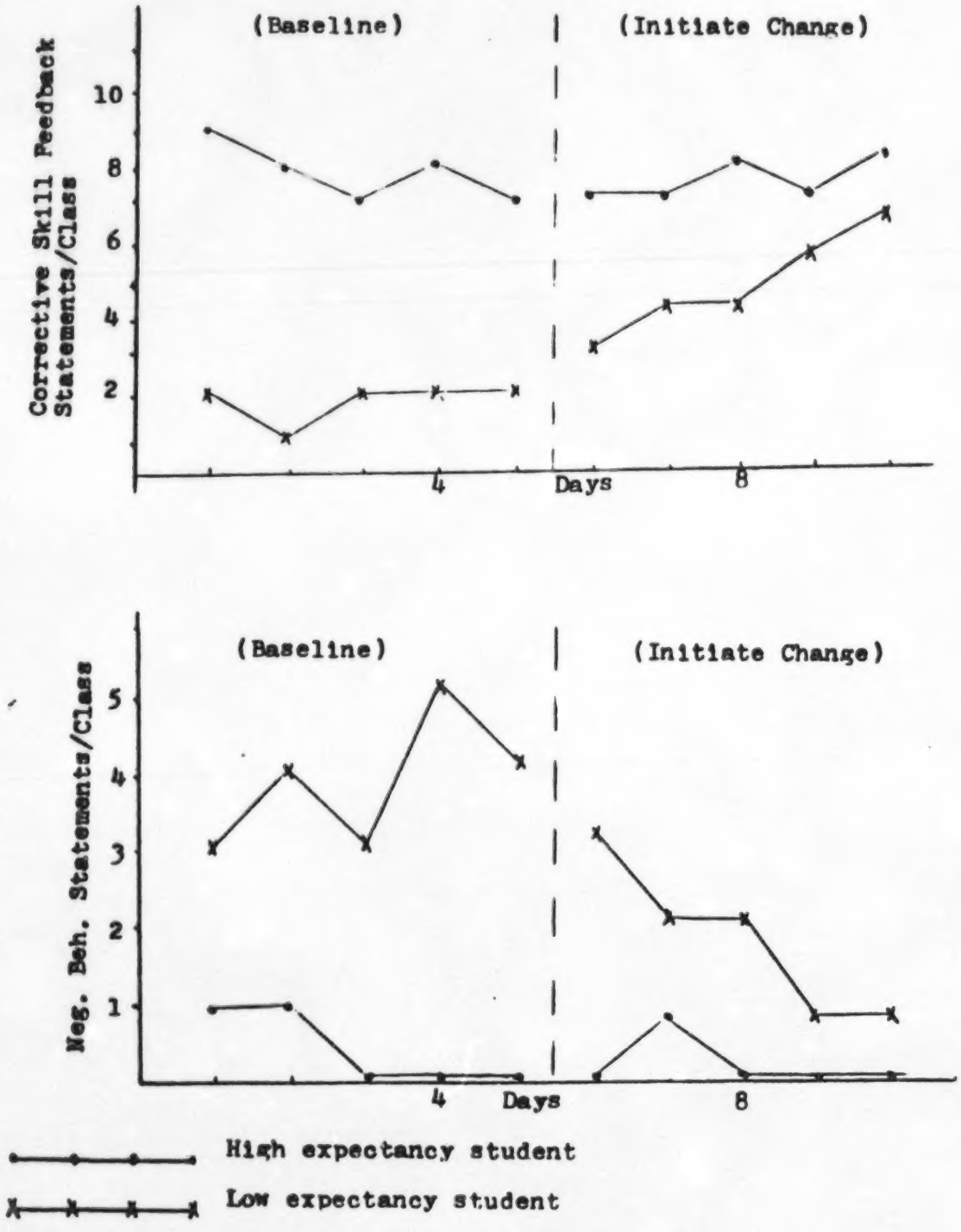

Figure 1.